

Top Secret 219

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_____ Saturday 24 September 1977 _____ CG NIDC 77/223C _____



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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Saturday, 24 September 1977

The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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RHODESIA-UN: Frontline Approval

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[redacted] Tanzanian President Nyerere announced yesterday in Maputo that the frontline countries have decided they can support the UK-US settlement proposals as the basis for further negotiations. Nyerere also noted, according to press reports, that the proposals contain "many negative aspects."

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[redacted] A Zambian official has told the US Embassy that the frontline presidents also agreed to urge the Patriotic Front leaders not to take actions that would "derail" the UK-US initiative.

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[redacted] The British have already appointed a commissioner-designate for Rhodesia, and, once the UN names its representative, the two will proceed to Rhodesia to begin negotiations with the black nationalist groups and the Rhodesian government--all of which have reservations about many aspects of the settlement proposals.

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NEW ZEALAND - USSR: Fishing Bid

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[redacted] //New Zealand is considering a Soviet bid to use on-shore port and crew-transfer facilities in New Zealand for the Soviet fishing fleet. Wellington has turned aside at least three earlier approaches but believes circumstances now dictate a serious study of the latest proposal.//

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[redacted] //Soviet fishermen have shown an increasing interest in expanding into the South Pacific as their traditional fishing areas have become restricted by other countries' 200-mile economic zones. By their approach to New Zealand, the Soviets hope to be placed first in line for fishing concessions after New Zealand's 200-mile zone goes into effect on 1 October.//

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[REDACTED] //As an inducement, the Soviets are holding out the prospect of continuing their large purchases of agricultural products from New Zealand. They have argued that the disparity between Soviet purchases from New Zealand--\$100 million last year--and New Zealand purchases from the USSR--less than \$4 million--makes it advisable for New Zealand to make some compensatory gesture.//

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[REDACTED] //New Zealand would prefer a guaranteed market in Japan for its primary products--beef and dairy goods--but Japan has been unresponsive to New Zealand's pleas for advance-purchase commitments to help New Zealand's production planning.//

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[REDACTED] //Australia is disturbed over New Zealand's consideration of the Soviet proposal. The government of Australian Prime Minister Fraser has been concerned about Soviet activities in the Indian Ocean and has shared New Zealand's concern about Soviet moves in the South Pacific.//

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[REDACTED] //New Zealand Prime Minister Muldoon shares Fraser's anti-Soviet views, and the New Zealanders profess reluctance to see Soviet fishing staged from their country. They argue, however, that--in addition to the incentive of a guaranteed Soviet market--surveillance of Soviets in New Zealand would be simpler than keeping tabs on them in Tonga and Western Samoa, the two other locations in the South Pacific where the Soviets have sought the use of facilities.//

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[REDACTED] //Despite their aversion to a Soviet presence, the New Zealanders believe they cannot reject the Soviet proposals out of hand in the absence of persuasive security arguments or stable alternate markets. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

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USSR: Indian Ocean Zone of Peace

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[] A lengthy Soviet commentary on Thursday in *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, the party's regional publication for the Russian Republic, called for the demilitarization of the Indian Ocean and criticized US policy in the area. Appearing on the eve of the reconvening of the US-Soviet Indian Ocean Working Group, the commentary reiterated the basic points the Soviet negotiating team raised last June in Moscow at the first meeting of the group.

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[] Echoing last week's *Izvestiya* commentary on the Indian Ocean, the article in Thursday's *Sovetskaya Rossiya* advocated the creation of a "zone of peace" in the Indian Ocean. The commentary stressed that this could be done only if the US and its allies were willing to dismantle their military bases and agree not to deploy strategic weapons in the region.

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[] Present Western policy in the Indian Ocean, asserted the commentary, was aimed at protecting US and European economic interests and maintaining a "bridgehead for the deployment of offensive nuclear missile weapons aimed at the USSR." In this, the commentary went on, the US was guilty of "supercharging tensions in this region." In a direct reference to President Carter's call last spring for a demilitarization of the Indian Ocean, the commentary asserted that the US had yet to clarify what it meant by demilitarization.

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[] While emphasizing Moscow's traditional commitment to arms control in the Indian Ocean, the commentary was quick to add that any agreement must not affect scientific research or the transit of merchant and naval ships through the international waters of the Indian Ocean. The basis of any agreement said the commentary, must be equality and reciprocity, a reference to the Soviet argument that the US already has the advantage in the region and its force reduction must be greater than that of the USSR. []

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PHILIPPINES: Muslim Situation

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[] //The major operation Philippine military forces conducted against Muslim rebel positions in the southern Philippines this week resulted in serious outbreaks of fighting, but both sides will try to avoid a complete breakdown of the eight-month-old cease-fire. There have been no reports of fighting since Thursday.//

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[] // [] the Moro National Liberation Front, the Muslim political organization, has taken advantage of the cease-fire to recruit, train, and consolidate its hold in some areas. The group is relatively secure in areas the Philippine armed forces no longer control; it carries out quasi-administration operations there, such as the collection of taxes from farmers.//

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[] The government-controlled Manila press has given prominent coverage to the "banditry and lawlessness" of the Muslim rebels, asserting that they have been effectively dealt with by the government's "police actions."// President Marcos probably hopes in this way to serve notice to the Philippine public that his tentative moves toward political "normalization" will not preclude a swift military reaction against any Muslim-inspired incidents.//

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[] //Although both sides appear unwilling to risk total breakdown in the cease-fire, the possibility of further large-scale clashes cannot be ruled out, particularly if government forces bring further military pressure to bear on the Muslim strongholds.// []

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